

Space to grow

With comprehensive storage upgrades from HP, the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council can now meet the ever growing needs of their townships with greater confidence.



The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council governs the rural, residential, and resort area of Hastings. The council was established over a hundred years ago in 1887 with the goal of providing “a sustainable high quality of life for all.” In recent years, however, the fast growing population of Hastings was quickly surpassing the council’s data storage capacity. So to better manage the exuberant growth of the populace, the council turned to HP to upgrade its storage systems.

HP customer case study: HP deploys a comprehensive data storage solution to help the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council support Hastings’s rapid growth.

Industry: Government

Objective

Upgrade existing data backup and recovery systems to meet growth expectations of the Hastings area.

Approach

Installation of HP OpenView Data Protector on a dedicated backup server in conjunction with HP StorageWorks MSL Fibre Channel Tape Library.

Results

- A centralised storage system across common media has simplified data management.
- An efficient framework has reduced costs while maximising processing efficiency.
- Enhanced scalability ensures that future additions can be implemented with ease.

A port of call for adventure seekers and sun worshippers

420 kilometres north of Sydney and 510 kilometres south of Brisbane, Hastings is a heady mixture of outback wilderness, urban farmlands, and busy beach resorts. The region is divided into three townships, the largest of these being Port Macquarie. With its string of 15 pristine beaches fronting the Pacific Ocean, Port Macquarie is both a major tourist attraction and the commercial centre of Hastings. The two smaller townships of Wauchope and Camden Haven serve as important rural inland centres.

Hastings is most popular today with sunbathers and water sports enthusiasts. But this wasn’t always so. Since the early 19th century, farming was the region’s primary industry, with maize, cotton, and wheat the main agricultural pursuits. Dairy and beef cattle farming became important industries in turn until the 1960s, when Hastings was transformed into a tourist attraction. Growth since then has been more than healthy, particularly in and around Port Macquarie where most of the region’s population is now concentrated.

Keeping up with a growing population

A steady, year-round influx of tourists and a rapidly expanding population spelt both good and bad news to the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council. While the bustling crowds were a boon to the economy, from an IT perspective the amount of data the council needed to process, manage, and archive every day was beginning to strain their data storage systems. This was compounded by the fact that the existing infrastructure was made up of tape drives over 20 years old. Data processing was consuming an unacceptable amount of time, delaying customer response times and hampering efficiency.

“Among the council’s core values are excellent customer service, high accountability, and accessibility. So when our 20-year old storage system began to show its age, we knew it was time for an overhaul. What we needed at that juncture was a data backup and recovery centre that was centralised, scalable, and compatible with existing and future IT infrastructure.”

Mr. John Peasley, IT Manager,
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Long-standing relationships give confidence

Storage bottleneck identified, the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council next needed to determine the best possible solution based on three criteria: cost-effectiveness, ease of management, and reliability. But above all, the solution had to fit tightly with the council's existing IT environment and possess the flexibility to support Hastings's growth expectations.

Computer Systems Australia Pty Ltd (CSA), an IT services provider and HP channel partner, was appointed to oversee the implementation of a new storage system. The council had worked with CSA before, and their strong relationship, along with CSA's proven experience in supporting IT solutions for local governments, made the appointment a logical move. Furthermore, the council had been working with HP's range of products and services on the majority of their servers for over 13 years, and were thoroughly familiar with them.

HP OpenView Data Protector: quickly deployed, easily managed

CSA's role in the project included advising the council on next steps, and designing, implementing, and supporting a comprehensive data storage solution.

To address Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's concern over timely backup and restore windows, CSA deployed HP OpenView Data Protector on a dedicated backup server utilising an HP StorageWorks MSL Fibre Channel Tape Library. The council's data repository was then backed up on the storage area network with the help of agents and a range of standalone servers with direct attached storage. With the new servers up and running, the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council now benefited from a centralised data backup and restoration facility across common media that was robust, reliable, and responsive.

Compatibility with pre-existing applications and programs was of great importance, which was one of the reasons why CSA chose to install HP OpenView Data Protector. The application had the flexibility to accommodate existing architecture smoothly. Primary authentication and file/print environments continued to be carried out on Novell Netware Servers, along with the range of Windows 2000 and 2003 servers with Active Directory real-time integration with Novell e-Directory, and other smaller applications such as BIZ, Risk Management, and Security.

The solution took a number of weeks to plan, but only a weekend to deploy within the council's IT nerve centre. As the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council could not afford any downtime for their customers, CSA and HP carried out and completed the actual implementation after-hours to ensure 24/7 availability. CSA also took pains to make sure that council staff were fully familiarised with the changes. They organised internal training courses and fielded questions the staff had about the new storage environment.

"The new systems have transformed the way we handle data. With our data brought together into one centralised location, managing and monitoring the backup environment couldn't be simpler or more effective. We encountered a few bugs during implementation, but once brought to HP Support's attention, they were satisfactorily stamped out."

Mr. John Peasley

Meeting present challenges, anticipating future needs

As the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council sees it, the installation of the new data storage systems started paying dividends from day one. Data backup and restoration, previously time-consuming processes that ate into customer response times and impacted efficiency, are now streamlined processes that execute smoothly within the expected windows. Data restoration has become an easier task to manage, while monitoring the backup environment has been considerably simplified. The council also now enjoys much greater security when performing data capture.

With a centralised storage system now in place, the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council can reap the rewards of a cost-effective solution for the present, and meet Hastings's growth expectations for the future.

"Long-term scalability has always been important to us. Because as the council grows so must its storage capacity. So far, we've already added additional servers to the new system, and implementation to include them in the backup solution has been nothing but smooth-sailing."

Mr. John Peasley
